DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 278 848 CE 046 397

TITLE	The Governance of Vocational Education. A Choice for Florida.
INSTITUTION	Florida State Council on Vocational Education, Tallahassee.
PUB DATE	Dec 86
NOTE	15p.
PUB TYPE	Viewpoints (120)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Administrative Organization; Adult Education; Community Colleges; *Educational Planning; Educational Policy; Educational Trends; Futures (of Society); *Governance; Government School Relationship; *Policy Formation; Postsecondary Education; State Boards of Education; *Statewide Planning; Two Year Colleges; *Vocational Education; Vocational Schools
IDENTIFIERS	*Florida

ABSTRACT

The issue of governance has been an area of continuing concern among vocational educators at the federal, state, and local levels for the past two decades. Since the Vocational Education Act of 1963 called for the creation of a single state agency to administer or supervise the operation of vocational education programs, local, state, and federal agencies have struggled with the implementation of that mandate. Today, the governance of vocational agencies in the states has been classified as of four types. Florida has the type designated as "Type A"--one agency for all levels of instruction. However, the actual operation of vocational education programs is an enterprise in which local, regional, and state governments participate. In order to determine the best way to improve Florida's vocational education governance, governance issues were examined in the light of the requirements of the federal mandate and intent, in the light of the experience of other states, and in the light of scholarly insight. The results of studies examined suggest that vocational education in Florida would not be enhanced if it were administered through community colleges, nor is the present system in which postsecondary education is lumped with secondary vocational education and other educational programs optimal. A third possibility, therefore, should be considered. Drawing from the system found in Hawaii, a case can be made for coordination from the top. Vocational education in Florida could benefit from a single highly placed officer (deputy commissioner of education) who would oversee the operation of the Division of Vocational, Adult, and Community Education to benefit the entire state. Continued use of Regional Coordinating Councils is also recommended. (KC)

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THE GOVERNANCE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

A CHOICE FOR FLORIDA

Florida Council on Vocational Education
Tallahassee, Florida

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December, 1986

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THE GOVERNANCE OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

A CHOICE FOR FLORIDA

The Governance of Vocational Education

Overview

The issue of governance has been an area of continuing concern among vocational educators at the federal, state, and local levels for the past two decades. Since the Vocational Education Act of 1963 called for the creation of a single state agency to administer or supervise the operation of vocational education programs, local, state, and federal agencies have struggled with the implementation of that mandate.

As of 1972, four basic governance structures were in use by the states to meet the federal mandate that a single state agency be responsible for the administration of vocational education. These structures include:

Type A: A state board with jurisdiction over all levels of education;
Type B: A separate state board with jurisdiction over vocational education;
Type C: A state board of education primarily responsible for elementary and secondary education also serving as the state board for vocational education;
Type D: A state board separate from the elementary/secondary or higher education board serving as the state board for vocational education.

Vocational Education Governance Structures

As recently as 1983, Don Gentry, state director of vocational and technical education in Indiana who made the study of vocational education governance the subject of his doctoral dissertation, published the following classification of state into various governance categories.

Type A: States with one agency for all levels of instruction

Florida	Michigan	Pennsylvania
Idaho	New York	Rhode Island

Type B: States with a separate board or agency for vocational education

Arkansas	Indiana	Oklahoma	Washington
Colorado	North Dakota	South Dakota	Wisconsin

Type C: States with the agency primarily responsible for elementary and secondary schools also serving as the board for vocational education

Alabama	Iowa	Missouri	North Carolina
Alaska	Kansas	Montana	Ohio
Arizona	Kentucky	Nebraska	Tennessee
California	Louisiana	Nevada	Texas
Connecticut	Maine	New Hampshire	Vermont
Delaware	Massachusetts	New Jersey	Virginia
Georgia	Minnesota	New Mexico	Wyoming
Illinois	Mississippi		

Type D: Other Structures

Hawaii--The Board of Regents for the University of Hawaii serves as the state board for vocational education.

South Carolina--The State Board of Education responsible for elementary and secondary education is responsible for vocational education at the secondary and adult levels and a Postsecondary and Technical Education Board manages postsecondary vocational education.

Source: Don Gentry, "The Issue of Governance Will Not Go Away." VocEd September, 1983

Gentry noted that the preponderance of Type C states is an outgrowth of historical factors dating back to the Tenth Amendment of the United States Constitution. With the expansion of postsecondary vocational education programs and federal initiatives in the 1960's and 1970's, states began to modify their governance structures to reflect the importance of postsecondary vocational education.

Currently in Florida, vocational programs are offered in secondary schools, area vocational-technical centers, community colleges, and even in universities where students who have completed prior studies can pursue advanced degrees in areas such as agriculture, business, health, and home economics.

Even though Florida is a Type A state, the actual operation of vocational education programs is an enterprise in which local, regional, and state governments participate. The question before the Council on Vocational Education centers on the issue of effectiveness. In consideration of attempts to maximize Florida's educational resources, the Council examined governance issues raised in Florida and around the nation.

In examining these issues three areas of analysis may be used. The issues may be examined in the light of the requirements of the federal mandate and intent; in the light of the experience of other states; and in the light of scholarly insight.

Federal Initiative and Intent

In the article on governance that was chosen for incorporation into The Planning Papers for the Vocational Education Study (1979), Gentry pointed out that the governance authority for vocational education must perform certain functions, including: 1) planning, 2) coordination, 3) needs identification, and 4) equitable distribution of funds. In her testimony before the Executive Committee of the Florida Council of Vocational Education in August 1986, Dr. Joyce Winterton, who was then serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Education for the United States Department of Education, reaffirmed the federal government's interest in coordination and planning at the state level in order to meet the demands of accelerating technology in the nation's economy.

When considering whether to shift the infrastructure for the administration of the previously noted four functions for vocational programs and services from the Division of Vocational, Adult, and Community Education in the state capital to either local agencies primarily responsible for elementary and secondary education or to the community colleges, either individually or collectively, it should first be ascertained whether or not either of these agencies could actually perform the required functions more effectively. The literature indicates that there are serious doubts that such a move is warranted.

Lessons from History

In considering the abilities of either local education agencies or community colleges to effect the necessary planning, coordination, needs indentification, and distribution of funds, the ability to establish proper relationships with other agencies administering vocational programs and the availability of sufficient informational resources to function effectively is called into question. Gentry raised this question in the Planning Papers, particularly with regard to Type C states. The question "Can an agency primarily responsible for elementary and secondary education establish proper relationships with agencies administering other levels of vocational education?" can, for present purposes, be also asked in reverse -- Can an agency primarily responsible with postsecondary education establish proper relationships with agencies mainly concerned with elementary and secondary education?

In both cases, the expertise of the administrative professionals, and the information that flows to them is sufficient to enable them to perceive the needs, capabilities, and resources of their own educational "turf" but is rarely sufficient to give equal treatment to other areas. Consequently, Gentry concluded that "the extent to which equitable treatment of all educational levels can be provided by a staff with major responsibility for a specific portion of that system is in doubt." Gentry's conclusion echoed a similar conclusion of the staff of the Montana Commission on Postsecondary Education, who examined this same problem in 1973 and concluded that "in such a case either public schools or higher education tend to be neglected."

Even in Arizona, a pioneer state in the articulation movement, the differences inherent in the various levels of vocational program offerings provide barriers that both secondary school and community college administrators found quite formidable. A Joint Governing Board Study Session Report identified these problem areas as follows: turfmanship, curriculum compatibility, scheduling and calendar conflicts, faculty certification requirements, attendance requirements, funding differences, property and equipment maintenance responsibilities, and transportation. Despite the goodwill and earnest effort expended by the administrators on both sides of the secondary/postsecondary barrier, direct recourse to the Arizona legislature was still necessary in order to make program articulation a reality.

The questions of where needs exist and where funds are directed in an educational system are never easy to answer. They are always partisans because attitudes vary and funding questions touch everyone. Although it is difficult to pinpoint attitudes, or to identify their sources, they are definitely present. The Council recognizes that the attitudes of educators already in the system might constitute an impediment to the possibility of placing all postsecondary vocational education under the administration of an agency, such as either local government or the community colleges, that is not predominantly concerned with the vocational education enterprise or historically responsible for it. It was this reason, among others, that the authors of the Flesher Report on Improving Opportunities for Vocational-Technical Education in Montana noted that "the junior college or community college plan is NOT the solution in Montana to the problem of improved opportunity for vocational-technical education." The researchers had found, in the case of Montana's junior and community colleges, that "their chief concern has been (and still appears to be) on "transfer" programs, or the first two years of a baccalaureate program."

Although there are in Florida some community and junior colleges where occupational education programs have flourished under a concerned administration (Gulf Coast Community College in Panama City provides an excellent example), there is evidence to suggest that the "pro occupational education" philosophy has not yet been suffused throughout the entire community college system. Likewise, the attempt of certain elements at Lake Sumter Community College to digest the Lake County Area Vocational-Technical Center in recent Florida history has made some of Florida's vocational educators wary of the power of community college presidents and worried about becoming "step-children" if the postsecondary occupational education system were to be merged.

In his article "No Merger in Lake County" published in 1983, Lake County AVTC Director Ken Bragg listed several reasons from the report of the study commission that voted unanimously to oppose the merger. One of these reasons touches directly upon the financial considerations involved:

> 6. While vo-tech centers operating under school boards are required by Florida law to spend 80 percent of the funds derived from state funding for vocational needs, vo-tech centers operating under community colleges are not required to spend any specific percentage of funds for vocational programs; the allocation of funds to vocational-technical programs is determined solely by the college president. This could mean that vocational-technical education would become a "step-child" if operated under the local community college . . .
>
> The commission concluded that the students and residents of Lake and Sumter counties will be served better if the two institutions continue to operate as separate delivery systems . . .
>
> The commission further recommended that there be a high degree of cooperation between the two institutions in order to avoid unwarranted duplication and to spawn a climate for delivering the best possible educational program in the central Florida service area.

Another study, Elizabeth Hope's dissertation on the use of State Staff and Program Development Funds by community colleges in Florida, also provided vocational educators with some reason to be sceptical about the equitable distribution of funds to occupational education within the community college system. Although Hope also found cases where occupational program and staff development had received enthusiastic support from community college administrations, she found that these cases were the exception rather than the rule. Her third conclusion specifically states that:

> Greater emphasis has been placed on A&P (Advanced and Professional) faculty development than on OCC (Occupational) faculty development in terms of percentage of funds and amount of dollars expended. Of the four categories investigated, Occupational faculty development has received the smallest amount of funds for the four years of the study. Literature indicates that the Occupational faculty has been the faculty in greatest need of developmental activities since the technology taught by this faculty has continued to change.

The results of studies such as Hope's and experiences such as that of Lake and Sumter counties give vocational educators little or no reason to expect that their lot would be improved if the burden of all occupational administration were to be assumed by the community colleges. Given the problems of inter-agency coordination, planning, needs assessment, and equitable funds distribution, there is insufficient evidence to indicate that the community colleges could function as a unifying force for vocational education programs to such a degree that significant improvements over the present system

would be immediately forthcoming. Likewise, the local districts lack the informational resources needed to assume the burden of statewide coordination that our modern age requires. The Florida Council on Vocational Education therefore declines to recommend that either course be followed.

An alternative, then, should be considered. An examination of governance systems of other states reveals that one of the most successful and cohesive vocational education delivery and governance systems is to be found in the state of Hawaii. The Hawaiian system is remarkable because it has very low incidence of dropouts, a very high completion rate, and an excellent placement rate. Hawaii is also known for the support and encouragement the business community has lent to the occupational training system. While these results may not have been derived from the system of governance, the lack of unwarranted duplication of programs, the maximum use of equipment, and cooperation of the various educational elements in the system may well have been derived from the governance structure.

As noted in the above chart, the governing board for vocational education in Hawaii is the Board of Regents for the University of Hawaii. Just as in ancient Italy all roads were said to lead to Rome, so in Hawaii all educational roads lead to the University of Hawaii. Virtually all public postsecondary educational institutions in the islands are outgrowths of the University of Hawaii and are perceived by Hawaiian educators as sharing in its mission.

Although Florida cannot become Hawaii, and the Board of Regents here is more burdened by the multiplicity of universities for which it must provide, Florida can still benefit from the example of coordination from the top. Vocational education in Florida could benefit from a single highly placed officer who would oversee the operation of the Division of Vocational, Adult, and Community Education to benefit the entire state with access to enough information to plan for the future of the state, and without partisanship for any element of the enterprise.

Recommendations

The Florida Commission on Vocational Education also considered the questions of planning and coordination for Florida's future. The commission held extensive hearings across and around the state to allow input from citizens for its deliberations. In the commission's report, Toward the Year 2000, it concluded that there "is a need for clearly defined responsibilities for planning, funding, operating and accounting for a unified, coordinated, totally integrated system of vocational education in Florida. There is a need for a high-visibility administrative officer with extensive vocational program management experience, such as a deputy commissioner of vocational education, to whom the state can look for complete, accurate information." The commission recommended the appointment of such a deputy commissioner.

A deputy commissioner would have certain advantages, including:

1) Access to all information collected by the Department of Education;

2) Ability to draw on a wide range of expertise in assembling an administrative staff;

3) Sufficient rank to obtain access to legislators and all other educational officials; and

4) Leadership for all elements of the vocational education enterprise.

A significant reason for recommending the elevation of a deputy commissioner of education to be the chief planning and coordinating officer for vocational education in Florida is the legal and constitutional importance of the Office of the Commissioner of Education. Robert Mautz, who served as Chancellor of the State University System in Florida from 1968 to 1975, commented on this importance in his analysis of the governance of higher education in Florida (The Power Game) published in 1982. As Mautz notes:

> The role of the Commissioner of Education has been enhanced, and he becomes the one constant in the governing structure . . . . Now the Commissioner of Education sits on the Board of Regents as a voting member. He also houses the staff of PEPC and provides administrative services for it. He has a large and able staff with immediate and daily access to him . . . . As secretary to the Board of Education, he controls the agenda of that Board and leads the discussions. As cabinet members change hats to sit as different boards and commissions to do the state's business, they tend to defer to the judgment of the cabinet member whose jurisdiction embraces the question being considered . . . . Thus it is unlikely that there would be strong opposition by a member of the Board of Education to a recommendation from the Commissioner of Education.

Another factor that would enhance the effectiveness of a deputy commissioner in planning and coordination is the available assistance of the Regional Coordinating Councils for Vocational, Adult, and Community Education. These 28 regional councils are already in place and functioning to improve articulation, encourage cooperation with the priviate sector as well as among public agencies, and restrict unwarranted duplication of programs.

The State Plan for Vocational Education describes the Regional Coordinating Councils as follows:

> Regional Coordinating Councils are established for each of the 28 Planning Regions for the purpose of planning for

vocational education, adult general education, and community instructional services. A regional council consists of the superintendents of schools, the directors of vocational and adult education of each school district within the planning region, the president of the community college, the deans or directors of vocational education and community instructional services of the community college, the vice president for academic programs, or a designee of each state university servicing the region, a representative of an independent vocational, technical, trade or business school located within the region, to be appointed by the Commissioner of Education, a representative of a branch of Florida State Employment Service located within the region, and lay citizens of the planning region.

Lay members comprise at least 51 percent of the council's voting membership. They are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Board of Education for four-year terms. The Governor selects these members from nominations submitted by economic development councils, chambers of commerce, community development corporations and other bona fide trade and business organizations within the vocational plannning region. At least one of each council's members must be a member of a Private Industry Council as provided by the Job Training Partnership Act (P.L. 97-300). The three primary responsibilities of the councils are as follows:

1) Maximize effective student articulation in programs of vocational education, adult general education, and community instructional services.

2) Establish and maintain effective and cooperative linkages with business and industry so that vocational training programs are responsive to the needs of the labor market.

3) Lead regional efforts in cooperation among school districts, community colleges, and state universities.

Taking all these factors into consideration, the Florida Council on Vocational Education endorses the view adopted by the Florida Commission on Vocational Education and recommends the appointment of a Deputy Commissioner for Vocational Education. Furthermore, the Council endorses a separate division for vocational-technical education. The Council has previously stated its support for a separate vocational division in its 1972, 1973 and 1976 annual evaluation reports and also with a position paper developed by the Council in 1972.

In its 1972 position paper the Council adopted a functional analysis, recommending that the division should be concerned with exercising leadership in performing three basic functions; administration, coordination, and evaluation.

A. The administration function should include the implementation of state and federal policy; fiscal, statistical and planning activities; reporting; and internal management.

B. The coordination function should be concerned with promoting smooth, effective interralationships among the institutions which are delivering occupational training services with respect to program development, curriculum, teacher-education, research, facilities, and equipment. The major goal should not be regulation, but rather the elimination of costly duplication.

C. The evaluation function is of primary importance because public funds, both state and federal, are used to support vocational education. The Division should be primarily concerned that these funds are used for the purpose for which they are appropriated, and further are used to provide quality vocational education at costs that are commensurate with the results obtained.

Comments received by the Council have generally praised the Vocational Division for its attempts to improve vocational and technical education in Florida. Technical assistance provided by the Division to local education agencies is highly rated, as was evidenced by written comments received from a Council questionnaire mailed to local vocational officials.

At that time, the Council noted that it had found "the benefits of retaining a division level designation for vocational education in Florida to be far in excess of any costs involved. Of particular importance to the Council are the benefits believed to accrue to students. Retaining vocational education at the division level has, overall, increased the efficiency and effectiveness through which students are served in vocational and technical programs in Florida."

In consideration of these benefits, the Council reiterates its earlier conclusion that the momentum in vocational-technical education, as currently being implemented, requires a continuing emphasis and direction if present gains are to be effectively integrated into the entire educational system. The Council, therefore, reaffirms its recommendation that the instrumentality of vocational and technical education should be retained in the Florida Department of Education at the division level.

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